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SMILE...IT MAY BE THE BOSS CALLING

(Aug. 2004) The Week of August 9th is National SMILE WEEK. Yes, I'm serious.

And there's rarely a program I present that someone doesn't ask me if smiling is really that important – either on the phone or in person. People actually ask me: "Nancy, can you really hear a smile?" Yes, Virginia, you can really hear a smile. And your caller can hear the lack of a smile as well.

So this is a column about SMILING and the reasons for it. Now, if you happen to already be a smiler, you might want to pass this article on to someone who isn't, or doesn't know that you CAN HEAR a smile.

First, let's take the word SMILE from Webster's dictionary:

SMILE: To smile, be astonished; to have or take on a facial expression, showing pleasure, amusement, affection, friendliness, irony, etc...and characterized by an upward curving of the corners of the mouth and a sparking of the eyes

See!! It's something most everyone can easily do.

And if it's that easy...don't you wonder why more people don't do it? Haven't you ever been in a store, or just been walking around, and see that people aren't smiling. Even when you start talking with them?

A recent New York Times review by Roxana Popescu of the book *A Brief History of the Smile* written by Angus Trumble asks a very good question – "Why do English speaking people say CHEESE to make you smile, but Chinese speakers

say Eggplant?" And Trumble continues, "The spontaneous smile of the little child is essentially truthful."

"Certainly we all know, not saying 'please' and 'thank you' is usually considered rude," says Friedman, "but the list of rude behavior is much longer than those offenses. I'm not sure why we constantly need to be reminded to smile," she continues, "but we do. You'd think it was common sense to smile when you're with a customer." Ah, but common sense is not that common now, is it?

Will a smile help? "Well," says Friedman, "as my mother used to say, "it couldn't hurt." Friedman also suggests keeping a mirror by your desk. "That" she says "is yet another good reminder to keep a smile on your face when you're talking with customers."

My husband and I are in airports a lot. We've made a conscience decision to keep a slight smile on our face when we walk through them. Why? Because when we look at the faces coming towards us... mouths turned downwards, looking worse than sad – almost mad...we decided we didn't want to look like that. Sure, it may feel a little funny keeping that little smile on our face, but we both know we look better for it.

SMILE Stickers
To help celebrate National SMILE WEEK and make it all year long, Telephone Doctor's offering our TELEPHONE RECEIVER SMILE LABELS – FREE. To get FREE SMILES for your office, [Click here](#). Your smiles will be on their way. (If you aren't able to wait, please call 314 291 1012 and tell 'em you want your SMILES!!!)

SMILE week reminded me of a story a skycap told me a few years ago. You'll enjoy it.

JOE, our friendly skycap at the St. Louis airport told me this story. He was walking through the airport a while back and came upon a woman sitting hunched over on her luggage – mouth turned down as far as it could be turned down. She looked – in his words – terrible. He decided to go over and ask her if she was OK. "Excuse me, M'am," he said, "are you OK?" The woman looked up – mouth continuing to be turned down, and grumbled a mean "YES." "Well," he said, "NOTIFY YOUR FACE."

So remember, if someone comes up to you and asks, "are you OK?" it probably means you don't look very happy.

Now say..."Cheese."

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